

Ross Valley School District
Notice of Exemption

Submitted to:

Marin County Clerk-Recorder's Office
3501 Civic Center Dr
San Rafael, CA 94903

Office of Planning and Research
Submitted electronically via CEQASubmit

From: Ross Valley School District (RVSD)

PROJECT TITLE: *Brookside School Pedestrian Bridge Replacement Project*

Project Address:
Brookside Elementary School
116 Butterfield Rd
San Anselmo, CA 94960

Assessor's Parcel Numbers:
APN 005-111-56
County of:
Marin

Project Description: This project at Brookside Elementary School will replace the existing pedestrian bridge over Sleepy Hollow Creek. The bridge is located in the southeastern portion of the Brookside Elementary School campus, approximately 125 feet east of Butterfield Road and directly west of a playground and classroom buildings D and E. The bridge serves as the main entrance to the campus and is accessed from parking Lot A, off of Butterfield Road.

The project involves removing the existing pedestrian bridge and the steel supports from the existing abutments, constructing new abutments, and installing a pre-constructed 47-foot-long pedestrian bridge on the new abutments. The project will not increase or decrease the student enrollment or campus occupant capacity. The existing abutments and their foundations will remain in place. New abutments will be constructed and a new pre-constructed 47-foot-long bridge will be installed on the new abutments. The project also includes improvements to the existing Parking Lot A on the west side of the creek, adjacent to Butterfield Road.

Brookside Elementary School is predominantly surrounded by single-family homes. There are some commercial businesses west and south of the school as well as the Ross Valley Fire Department Fire Station 20, which is 420 feet north of the project site. US Highway 101 is located approximately 2.40 miles east of the campus.

The project includes the following elements:

- **Site Preparation:**
 - Install, maintain, and remove erosion control measures as required by the project's Erosion and Sediment Control Plan.
 - Install tree protection fencing around trees to be retained.
 - Sawcut existing asphalt and concrete surfaces (approximately 4,00 square feet) in the eastern and southern portions of Parking Lot A and within the walkway between classroom buildings D and E.
- **Project Implementation:**

- Remove the existing 43-foot-long pedestrian bridge; cut the existing steel supports from the existing concrete abutments; leave the existing abutments in place.
- Replace stormwater drain on the east end of the existing bridge.
- Construct new abutments at each end of the bridge, with a drilled pier abutment on the west side and a spread footing abutment on the east side. The drilled pier abutment will be located at the edge of the existing parking lot and installed using a core drill, which allows for controlled removal of the drilled material.
- Install the new 47-foot-long pre-constructed bridge, designed and constructed in compliance with requirements of the Division of the State Architect. The bridge will be installed using a crane and attached to the new abutments.
- Install asphalt concrete within the eastern and southern areas of Parking Lot A and the walkway to the pedestrian bridge extending westerly from classroom buildings D and E to create a code-compliant and fully-accessible path of travel.
- Regulatory Compliance Actions: the project includes the following actions to ensure compliance with applicable state and federal environmental regulations
 - Construction Debris Trackout - The construction contractor will be responsible for cleanup of mud and debris carried onto surrounding streets and roads as a result of construction activity on the site to the satisfaction of the City of San Anselmo.
 - Pre-Construction Nesting Bird Survey - There are existing trees and shrubs vegetation within and surrounding the project site that could support nesting birds (Dudek 2026a). Nesting birds are present throughout the state and thus this does not represent an unusual circumstance (refer to the Exceptions to Use of a Categorical Exemption discussion, Section c, below). RVSD and its contractors will ensure that construction activities comply with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act by removing vegetation outside of the bird nesting season (February 1 to September 30) when feasible and/or by retaining a qualified biologist to conduct a preconstruction nesting survey when construction would begin during the nesting season. If this occurs, RVSD and its contractors will ensure that the survey occurs no sooner than 7 days prior to construction and upon the direction of the qualified biologist, construction activities proximate to any active nests are postponed until young have fledged.
 - Pre-Construction Roosting Bat Survey – There are existing trees and structures in and within 50 feet of the project site that could support maternity roosting or overwintering bats (Dudek 2026a). Bats are present throughout the state and thus this does not represent an unusual circumstance (refer to the Exceptions to Use of a Categorical Exemption discussion, Section c, below). RVSD and its contractors will ensure that construction activities comply with California Fish and Game Code Section 4150 by scheduling work outside the bat roosting period (generally from March through September) when feasible and/or by retaining a qualified biologist to conduct a preconstruction bat roosting survey of trees and buildings when site activity would begin during the roosting season. If this occurs, RVSD and its contractors will ensure that the survey occurs no more than 30 days prior to the commencement of activities within the project site. If structures or buildings with potential roosting habitat and/or bat sign are identified, the biologist will also conduct an evening visual emergence survey of the roosts from 0.5 hours before to 1-2 hours after sunset for a minimum of two nights, using full-spectrum acoustic detectors to assist in species identification. If evening surveys confirm the presence of an active bat maternity roost, that roost will remain undisturbed with a buffer as determined by the biologist until August 31 or

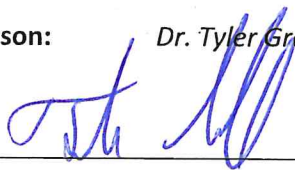
until the biologist has determined that the roost is no longer active.

- Unanticipated Archaeological Resources - Based on geomorphological evidence, the area has a low potential to contain unanticipated archaeological resources. However, it is possible, albeit unlikely, that the remains of previously unknown intact archaeological deposits are present at subsurface levels (Dudek 2026b). This potential occurs throughout the state and thus this does not represent an unusual circumstance (refer to the Exceptions to Use of a Categorical Exemption discussion, Section c, below). RVSD and its contractors will ensure that construction activities comply with state law in the event that archaeological resources (sites, features, or artifacts) are exposed during construction activities by requiring that all construction work occurring within 100 feet of the find immediately stop until a qualified archaeologist, meeting the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards, can evaluate the significance of the find and determine whether or not additional study is warranted and that any recommendations provided by the archaeologist are implemented prior to continuation of project activities within 100 feet of the resource(s).
- Unanticipated Human Remains – There are no known human remains within or adjacent to the project site however it is possible that subsurface human remains could be encountered during ground disturbing activities (Dudek 2026b). This potential occurs throughout the state and thus this does not represent an unusual circumstance (refer to the Exceptions to Use of a Categorical Exemption discussion, Section c, below). RVSD and its contractors will ensure that construction activities comply with California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 if human remains are exposed during construction activities by immediately notifying the County Coroner of the discovery, halting all excavation and/or disturbance at the location of the human remains and any nearby area reasonably suspected to overlie adjacent remains, and following the procedures and guidance expressed in the Health and Safety Code and/or provided by the County Coroner and Native American Heritage Commission.

This project has been **approved by and will be carried out by the** Ross Valley School District.

Lead Agency Contact Person: *Dr. Tyler Graff, Superintendent*

Signature: _____



Date: _____

4/22/26

EXEMPT STATUS

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|-------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Ministerial Project (Section 21080(b)(1); 15268) |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Categorically Exempt Class: Sections 15302 and 15314 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Declared Emergency (Section 21080(b)(3); 15269(a)) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Emergency Project (Section 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c)) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Statutory Exemption (Code/Section _____) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | The project clearly will not have a significant effect on the environment (15061(b)(3)) |

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

This project consists of the demolition of existing buildings and the construction of new buildings on existing RVSD property within the Town of San Anselmo. The project is exempt under CEQA Guidelines Section 15302 – Replacement or Reconstruction (Class 2) and Section 15314 – Minor Additions to Schools (Class 14).

The project meets the conditions for these exemptions as explained below.

Replacement or Reconstruction (Class 2).

Categorical Exemption Class 2 consists of replacement or reconstruction of existing structures and facilities where the new structure will be located on the same site as the structure replaced and will have substantially the same purpose and capacity as the structure replaced.

The project will remove the existing pedestrian bridge and the steel supports from the existing abutments over Sleepy Hollow Creek, construct new abutments, and install a pre-constructed 47-foot-long pedestrian bridge on the new abutments. The project also includes improvements to the existing Parking Lot A on the west side of the creek, adjacent to Butterfield Road. The project will not increase or decrease the student enrollment or campus occupant capacity.

Minor Additions to Schools (Class 14).

Categorical Exemption Class 14 consists of minor additions to existing schools within existing school grounds where the addition does not increase original student capacity by more than 25% or ten classrooms, whichever is less.

The project will replace an existing pedestrian bridge at an existing elementary school. The project will not increase or decrease the student enrollment or student capacity. No new classrooms or other buildings are included in the project.

Exceptions to Use of a Categorical Exemption: The project does not have the potential to trigger any of the exceptions identified in CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 prohibiting the use of a categorical exemption.

- a. Location. Classes 3, 4, 5, 6, and 11 are qualified by consideration of where the project is to be located - a project that is ordinarily insignificant in its impact on the environment may, in a particularly sensitive environment, be significant. Therefore, these classes are considered to apply in all instances, except where the project may impact on an environmental resource of hazardous or critical concern where designated, precisely mapped, and officially adopted pursuant to law by federal, state, or local agencies.

This exception does not apply to the project because it does not apply to a Class 2 or Class 14 Exemption.

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- b. Cumulative Impact. All exemptions for these classes are inapplicable when the cumulative impact of successive projects of the same type in the same place, over time is significant.

RVSD does not anticipate any future projects of the same type at this project site. The properties adjacent to the project site parcel are all designated by the Town of San Anselmo for residential land uses. There are several new development and redevelopment projects are in progress in the Town of San Anselmo, including the San Anselmo Library Roof/HVAC and Interior Refresh Project (approximately 1.35 miles southeast of the project site), the Town Hall Resilience Hub (approximately 1.30 miles southeast), the Fire Station 20 Renovation Project (approximately 450 feet northeast), the Sequoia Park Safe Routes to Schools Project (has several locations but the Sequoia Drive site is the closest and 1.20 miles southeast), and the Hub Transportation Study Project (approximately 1.30 miles southeast). The Fire Station 20 Renovation Project is the closest to the project site and the Sequoia Park Safe Routes to Schools Project is the only project still in the design phase whereas the others are currently under construction (Town of San Anselmo 2026). None of these projects have the potential to result in offsite impacts adjacent to or within the Brookside Elementary School campus and thus no cumulative impacts are expected to occur as a result of implementation of the Brookside School Pedestrian Bridge Replacement Project in addition to the other ongoing development and redevelopment projects within the Town.

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- c. Significant Effect. A categorical exemption shall not be used for an activity where there is a reasonable possibility that the activity will have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances.

The project site and surrounding neighborhood are located within a residential and suburban area that is mostly flat with some surrounding hills. Although there are sensitive biological resources within the project vicinity, including resources associated with Sleepy Hollow Creek (Dudek 2026a), the project would not require disturbance of riparian vegetation or aquatic resources. The project site is not known to contain sensitive cultural resources (Dudek 2026b). Thus, there are no unusual circumstances or conditions that indicate the project could result in a significant environmental effect at the project site or in the surrounding area.

The site could support nesting birds, roosting or overwintering bats, below-ground archaeological resources, and/or human remains. However, these are common constraints

for many projects throughout the State of California and do not represent an unusual circumstance. By implementing the Regulatory Compliance Actions included in the project description, RVSD and its contractors will ensure that construction activities:

- comply with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act to ensure there is no disturbance to nesting birds;
- comply with California Fish and Game Code to ensure there is no disturbance to roosting or overwintering bats;
- comply with state law to ensure appropriate treatment of archaeological resources should any be encountered onsite; and
- comply with California Health and Safety Code to ensure appropriate treatment of human remains should any be encountered onsite.

Furthermore, there is nothing unusual about the design of the new bridge structure, new abutments, or parking lot improvements relative to projects that meet the criteria for the Class 2 or Class 14 Categorical Exemptions that could result in a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances. Therefore, this exception does not apply to the project because there is no reasonable possibility that the project will have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances.

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- d. Scenic Highways. A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may result in damage to scenic resources including, but not limited to, trees, historic buildings, rock outcroppings or similar resources, within a highway officially designated as a state scenic highway.

The project site is approximately 2.50 miles from U.S. Route 101 (US 101). The portion of US 101 that passes through San Rafeal and north of San Rafeal is not an eligible state scenic highway. However, US 101 outside of that portion is considered an eligible state scenic highway. The northern eligible portion is approximately 6.40 miles northeast of the project site and the southern eligible portion is approximately 8.30 miles southwest of the project site (Caltrans 2026). The school is not visible from either eligible portion of US 101. There are no trees, historic buildings, rock outcroppings or other scenic elements at the project site that are visible from US 101, thus the project will have no effect on views of scenic resources from the eligible portion of US 101.

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- e. Hazardous Waste Sites. A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project located on a site that is included on any list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code.

According to the California State Water Resources Control Board Geotracker database and the California Department of Toxic Substances Control Envirostor database, there are no active hazardous materials sites within or adjacent to the project site. Thus, the project is not located on a site that is included on any list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code (SWRCB 2026, DTSC 2026 and this exception does not apply to the project.

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- f. Historical Resources. A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project that may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource.

There are no known historical resources within the project site. Thus, the project will not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource and this exception does not apply to the project.

REFERENCES

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- DTSC (California Department of Toxic Substances Control). 2025. Envirostor. Accessed March 6, 2026.
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- Dudek 2026a. Biological Resources Assessment Report for the Ross Valley School District—Brookside Elementary School Pedestrian Bridge Replacement Project, San Anselmo, California. March 2026.
- Dudek 2026b. Archaeological Resources Letter Report for the Ross Valley School District—Brookside Elementary School Pedestrian Bridge Replacement Project, San Anselmo, California. March 2026.
- SWRCB (State Water Resources Control Board). 2025. GeoTracker. Accessed March 6, 2026.
<https://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/>.
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